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# Message Text

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64
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

/061 W
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R 011600Z AUG 75
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2121

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5186

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, AR
SUBJECT: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY. FOLLOWING LAST WEEK'S HECTIC LEVEL OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY, THE POLITICAL SITUATION ON THE SURFACE GIVES APPEARANCE OF HAVING COOLED DOWN. HOWEVER, INTENSE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MANEUVERING CONTINUES AND SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO UNFOLD SHORTLY. THE JOCKEYING IN CONGRESS TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO RAUL LASTIRI IS EXPECTED TO CULMINATE SHORTLY WITH ELECTIONS OF NEW OFFICERS IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. INTERIOR MIN BENITEZ AND SO-CALLED "MINI CABINET" HAVE SHOWN SIGNS OF ATTEMPTING TO FILL POWER VACUUM IN GOA CREATED BY THE DEPARTURE OF LOPEZ REGA. RUMORS CONTINUE TO ABOUND THAT MRS. PERON WILL SHORTLY DEPART FOR VACATION. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE POLITICAL ACTIVITY THIS WEEK ON SURFACE NOT AS INTENSE AS THAT OF PREVIOUS WEEK, THE VARIOUS SECTORS ARE ENGAGED IN INTENSE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MANEUVERINGS, AND EMBASSY SOURCES INDICATE THAT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL CHANGES CAN BE EXPECTED IN NEAR FUTURE. FIRST AREA IN WHICH CHANGES ARE EXPECTED TO OCCUR IS IN THE CONGRESS WHERE BITTER STRUGGLE HAS BROKEN OUT WITHIN JUSTICIALIST PARTY OVER SELECTION OF SUCCESSOR TO RAUL LASTIRI. AD HOC ALLIANCES HAVE FORMED AROUND THE
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QUESTION OF WHETHER THE CONGRESS SHOULD ELECT LASTIRI'S

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SUCCESSOR WITHOUT REFERENCE TO MRS. PERON OR WHETHER
SHE SHOULD BE ASKED TO PLAY LARGE IF NOT DETERMINING
ROLE IN SUCCESSION QUESTION. IN SHORTHAND TERMS, THE
STRUGGLE IS BEING CHARACTERIZED AS ONE BETWEEN
"VERTICALISTAS" AND "ANTI-VERTICALISTAS". IN THE
ANTI-VERTICALISTA CAMP IS FOUND A LARGE MAJORITY OF
THE POLITICAL WING OF THE PERONIST CONGRESSIONAL BLOC,
ALTHOUGH A VOCAL MINORITY WITHIN THE POLITICAL WING
VIGOROUSLY DEFENDS THE VERTICALISTA POSITION. THE LABOR
WING IS SIMILARLY SPLIT OVER ISSUE WITH NEO-VANDORIST
GROUP WITHIN LABOR BLOC FAVORING ANTI-VERTICALISTA POSITION
AND LORENZO MIGUEL OF 62 ORGANIZATIONS BEING CHIEF
PROPONENT OF THE VERTICALISTA PERSUASION. A LARGE
FRACTION OF LABOR DEPUTIES AND SOME POLITICAL WING
DEPUTIES ARE REPORTED UNDECIDED ON ISSUES. THEIR VOTES
MAY DECIDE OUTCOME IF IT COMES TO PUBLIC VOTE.

2. BEHIND THE SLOGANS AND POLITICAL MANEUVERINGN A LARGE
ISSUE IS AT STAKE, FOR IF THE ANTI-VERTICALISTAS WIN OUT
IN CONGRESS ALL VESTIGES OF MRS. PERON'S CONTROL OVER
CONGRESS INCLUDING LABOR WING WOULD BE PUBLICLY REPUDIATED.

3. IMMEDIATELY AFTER LOPEZ REGA'S DEPARTURE, BENITEZ
GAVE APPEARANCE OF BEING "HONEST BROKER" FACILITATING
THE REMOVAL OF LOPEZ REGA FOLLOWERS AND COOPERATING
CLOSELY WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL PERONISTS. IN LAST
FEW DAYS, HOWEVER, HE APPEARS TO HAVE BEGUN TO MANEUVER
HIS "MINI CABINET", COMPOSED OF HIMSELF, JUSTICE MIN
CORVALAN NANCLARES AND DEFENSE MINISTER GARRIDO TO FILL
THE ROLE PREVIOUSLY PLAYED BY LOPEZ REGA. (INTERESTINGLY,
FONMIN VIGNES IS ONLY CABINET MEMBER STILL HOLDING SAME
POST AS BEFORE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS, YET HE IS
CONSPICUOUSLY NOT INCLUDED IN MINI CABINET. HIS PROSPECTS
ARE ANALYZED IN SEPTEL). WHILE NOT TAKING A PUBLIC STAND
ON THE VERTICALISTA/ANTI-VERTICALISTA DEBATE, BENITEZ
HAS HELD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH ANTI-VERTICLAISTA CONGRESS-
MEN IN RECENT DAYS. ACCORDING TO EMB SOURCES BENITEZ
IS ATTEMPTING TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR IDEA THAT MRS. PERON,
UNDER HIS GUIDANCE, REMAIN IN OFFICE. SOME POLITICAL
OBSERVERS ARE REFERRING TO BENITEZ STRATEGY AS ONE OF
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SUPPORTING A "REIGN BUT NOT RULE" ROLE FOR MRS. PERON
IN WHICH HE WOULD HOLD EFFECTIVE POWER.

5. PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT MRS. PERON
WILL GIVE SPEECH IN NEXT DAY OR TWO. AS SHE IS STILL
REPORTEDLY ILL, MANY OBSERVERS ARE SPECULATING THAT
SHE WILL USE OCCASION OF SPEECH TO INFORM COUNTRY
SHE WILL TAKE SHORT VACATION IN THE COUNTRY WITHOUT

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REQUESTING OFFICIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE.
HILL

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